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Statement submitted by Marangopoulos Foundation for Human Rights, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is being issued without formal editing.

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Statement

2015 will mark a paradigm shift for the United Nations, as it will transition from the Millennium Development Goals to its new development agenda, the sustainable development goals. As we transition, we have to acknowledge that the Millennium Development Goals have marked a historic method of global mobilization to achieve a set of important social priorities worldwide. However, although some positive steps in achieving the Millennium Development Goals have been taken, progress is still lagging behind and has been highly variable across countries, especially developing ones. As a result, operationalizing a new integrated sustainable development approach requires learning from past experience and rectifying shortcomings in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, in order to make the transition from the latter to the SDGs more effective.

The Marangopoulos Foundation for Human Rights holds that the achievement of the sustainable development goals requires that governments must ensure the active involvement of business in the implementation of the new development agenda.

Moreover, policy approaches need to be more inclusive and all local stakeholders, particularly the poor and most vulnerable should be better empowered to engage in decision-making processes. Towards this end, the appropriate legal, policy, political and more broadly institutional conditions need to be fostered through policy dialogue, advocacy and other means.

In this regard, women can play an upgraded role and act as drivers of change for sustainable development. Given that the paradigm shift towards sustainable development requires a renewed focus on people-centred development, the inherent connection of women's rights to development should be promoted. This requires involving women actively in decision-making at all levels, integrating their concerns and perspectives in policies and programmes and establishing ways to assess the impact of development policies on women. Gender equality and the empowerment of women should not merely constitute one of the proposed sustainable development goals, but it must be widely understood that they are necessary in order for sustainable development to become a reality.

Along the same lines, it is equally important to mainstream youth in the post-2015 development agenda, by, for instance, mobilizing them to pressure governments and opening the decision-making process. Moreover, the needs of the youth, such as the access to education of all levels and the fight against unemployment, should be expressly addressed by the sustainable development goals. In this context, special focus should be placed upon these needs throughout the monitoring process.

Our Foundation firmly believes that the post-2015 development agenda should follow the human rights-oriented approach. Above all, it is important to recall, that every United Nations action should have as ultimate objective of the full realization of all human rights for all persons without discrimination.